

Scottish Child

February/March 1990

£1.00

Self-Determination

School Boards

Message through Music

Punishment

Custody Law



TAKING CHARGE

IF YOU TELL US WHAT YOU DO, SOON EVERYONE WILL KNOW



There's no getting away from it. Presentation counts. Nowadays everything from soft drinks to share issues announce their arrival with eye-catching publicity. Often what's being said isn't worth saying. And what's worth saying isn't being said loud enough.

That's where SCOTTISH CHILD come in. We're committed to helping people with something worth saying to say it loud and clear. People carrying out innovative projects that want what they're doing to be more widely known. Groups involved in the sort of day to day work with people that often goes unrecognised. Organisations that want to liven up their image a bit. Whether it's an annual report, a poster, a regular newsletter or maybe just a one off postcard or leaflet – we could be the people to help.

What we offer is unique. We'll provide imaginative design, eye-catching photography, high quality printing. But that's not all. We understand the issues facing organisations working under pressure, doing jobs that too often don't get the recognition they deserve. We've done them ourselves. So we can help in writing your publication as well – whether it's taking on the whole job from start to finish, or advising you on

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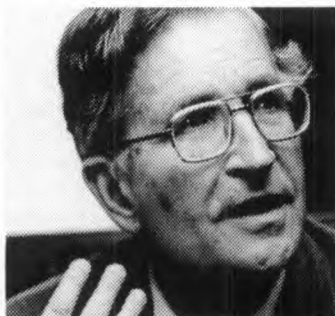
Oh, and we publish Scotland's best looking independent magazine as well.

If you're happy with the way you present yourself on posters and in print, that's fine – you won't need our help. But if you're interested in what we have to offer, and want a chat about it, give us a ring on 031-552 0472 (24 hours), or write to us at SCOTTISH CHILD, 347A Pilton Avenue, Edinburgh EH5 2LE. You've nothing to lose. And it could do wonders for your appearance.

Scottish Child

CONNECTIONS

4



If you didn't make it to the recent Self-Determination and Power Event in Govan, at least Connections has a report on what you missed. Meanwhile **Graham Atherton** reviews the progress of the School Boards, and **Elizabeth McClelland** regrets the need she feels to pay for her children's schooling.

THIS DIARY

11

Wretchedly pessimistic by nature, **Daniel Boyle** admits he has sighted an outbreak – rare in these greedy times – of unsolicited decency.

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

12



Continuing our occasional series where people who work with children describe what they do, in **Sounds Alive**, **Janette Montague** helps children to communicate through the medium of music.

PUNISHMENT

16



The more we talk about alternatives to custody, the more we argue about the ethics of belting or smacking children, the more the whole concept of punishment itself remains unchallenged. **Rosemary Milne** challenges a change.

EDITORIAL

18



In an extended editorial comment, **Scottish Child** reviews the prospects for Scotland growing up.

LOOKING BACK

20

Tony Duffy, in another story about the experiences of a young man in the world of learning, looks into **The Bing Lumsden File**.

REVIEWS

24



Radical Renfrew writers.

LAW

26



In the first of a regular new series on aspects of the law as it affects families, **Cathy Marr** examines the area of the custody of children when parents break up . . .

and **Sam Martin** and **Bert McCann** outline the work of the Scottish Association of Family Conciliation Services.

MEDIA WATCH

31



LETTERS

32

AFTER-THOUGHTS

35

We apologise to readers who were looking forward to the promised feature about Computer Technology's impact on our lives. We will be running the article in a future issue.

Scottish Child February/March 1990 3

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Deeper Waters

SCHOOL BOARDS

Now that in all parts of Scotland, the new School Boards are up and running, their members, many of whom are serving in public office for the first time, are getting to grips with their new role and responsibilities.

Yet because of their novelty and the felt lack of guidance and information that has characterised their introduction, the School Boards find themselves in uncharted waters. So it might be useful to speculate on just what they will make of them.

Boards could adopt a 'minimalist' role of going through the motions of promoting parental involvement in school, through for example the token newsletter or parents' meeting, while basically leaving the school to function more or less as before. Indeed some boards may defend such a position if the school already has a good track record in these matters.

On the other hand boards might assume a 'developmental' role, questioning established ways of doing things and setting up new structures of participation. In time honoured tradition, most may opt for a bit of both, or something in between.

A 'realist' would probably argue that School Boards should concentrate their effort on practical issues – how to boost school funds, improve playground sa-

fety, or keep the school in good repair. Like the schools councils they have replaced, the boards would keep discussion of curricular and other educational issues to a bare minimum. A Glasgow University report on the old schools councils showed that only 1% of agenda items were about the curriculum.

Indeed, School Boards are likely to get more credit for big accomplishments over small things, than for minor advances over the big problems. Brownie points are likely to be greater for the board that gets action on leaky roofs, than for the one that enters the 'secret garden' of the curriculum.

An 'idealist' position would be that parent and other board members have a special responsibility to promote parental involvement in education. Parents are their child's natural and de jure educators. Parent-teacher dialogue should take place with no holds barred – about educational aims, methods and purposes. The School Board in this model should facilitate this process, and develop effective home-school communication. (A training module in this area has already been devised.)

However it would be at this point that School Boards would find themselves drifting into the uncharted waters. Children's development is not only about home and school getting their act together. The control and resourcing of education, not to

mention the whole set of beliefs, ideology and values surrounding child education, are the kinds of factors met at this stage. Children's ability and motivation to profit from education is sewn in with the social and economic fabric of society.

School Boards, because in reality they represent very small fish in a troubled educational ocean, may very well head for shallower but safer waters and limit themselves to peripheral matters. The cost of doing so however, is likely to be the continued under-resourcing of education and the domination of educational debate and policy making by a limited range of interest groups, from which those with the biggest stake in education – parents, pupils and chalkface teachers – are usually excluded.

Yet such a no change scenario need not inevitably arise. If School Boards were to form local regional and national federations, staffed by a secretariat (as in countries like Denmark), then they may be able to make their mark. Such a democratically accountable system of federations would function as a forum for member boards to respond to or initiate educational policies. The federations could carry out lobbying, media and other work to match that routinely carried out by other organisations.

Certainly if the School Boards fail to take joint action to deal with the very fundamental pro-

blems that bedevil our educational institutions, critics who perceive School Boards as an 'ir-relevance' are likely to have their beliefs confirmed. For the reported success of Scottish comprehensive schools notwithstanding, in ameliorating social class inequalities in achievement, as elsewhere they fail most of our children dismally.

While it would be naive to lay the blame for society's ills at the door of our education system, to deny the connection between social ills and the type of education provided would be a gross denial. The traditional pursuit of academic excellence for example, while in a sense laudable, has got in the way of education for purposes other than servicing the Gross National Product, or perpetuating a cultural elite.

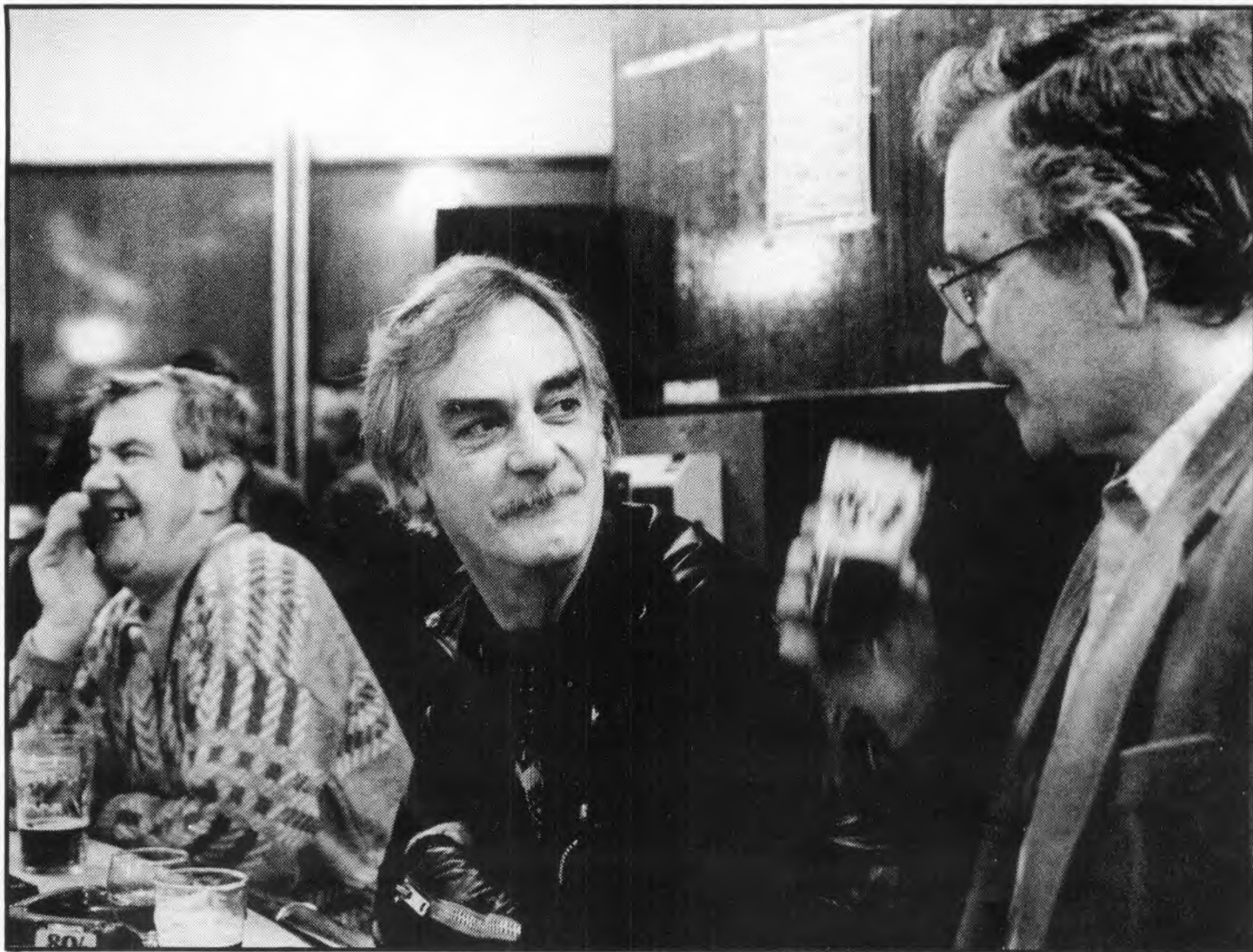
So School Boards cannot easily hide from their wider responsibilities in the hope that 'the authorities' are really the only ones in a position to decide policy and priorities. School Boards which do not enter the cut and thrust of educational debate may justly be accused of propping up a system which has short changed the majority of the children and young people they are ultimately supposed to represent. ■

Graham Atherton

The views of the author are personal ones.



Julia Morris



Julia Morris

Noam Chomsky in Govan

Self-Determination and Power

GOVAN EVENT

More than 300 hundred people met in the hospitable surroundings of the Pearce Institute in Govan on the 10th and 11th January, to talk – and sing and read – about self-determination and power.

Some of them, perhaps even the majority, had signed on to be able to listen to Professor Noam Chomsky, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. If that was their reason, they cannot have gone away disappointed. Noam Chomsky gave two lectures, the first lasting a little under two hours and the second, under the title 'Common Sense and Freedom', responded to by the Scottish philosopher George Davie.

Judged by any standards these gave exhilarating evidence of one man's ability and determination to understand and convey to others the complexities of modern power politics and their

historical roots, the philosophical basis of political systems, and the nature of freedom.

But the Event went well beyond the intellectual reward in hearing a brilliant scholar speak. It brought together individuals from as far afield as Lithuania and Southern Africa, and as close at hand as Govan community groups. It mixed the unemployed, and the retired, the professional and the artisan, the over-60s and the under-21s, writers, artists, musicians, poets. It sat Marxist next to Anarchist, Nationalist next to Labourite.

They argued in their discussion groups; they cleared chairs together and tidied away the plates and coffee cups; they may even have bought each other a drink in the bar while waiting for the readings and the music to begin in the evening.

Divisions were everywhere – and acknowledged. The doers and the thinkers; the quest for a better understanding of self as a

prelude to action versus the need to mobilise the collective and avoid too much introspection; the relative importance of structures and this nebulous omnipresent entity which those in the know, the chairman Derek Rodger included, call 'process'; the rational man and the mystical woman – symbols in history and the present.

The discussion was as diverse as the membership. It highlighted the concerns of educationalists and parents, perhaps most eloquently articulated by Gus John, a Director of Education from the London borough of Hackney.

And in the evenings, following the old tradition, story-tellers, Mandlenicosi Langa, Zoe Williams, James Kelman, Alasdair Gray and poets like Tom Leonard, Hamish Henderson, Aonghas MacNeacail and members of the Leningrad 81 Club read and recited their verse and prose.

There were no resounding conclusions, there was no charter of action. But there was a convincing reaffirmation of the value of debate, as well as plenty of energetic anger about the state of the nation. Not bad for a beginning.

Scottish Child joined with the **Free University** and the **Edinburgh Review**, to organise the Event. That is worth a whole write-up of its own – a fair example of what can be achieved by people power in the absence of big bucks, full-time organisational staff and the supposedly obligatory publicity machine.

Not bad for a beginning. We look forward to seeing you at future events. Remember, you'll need to book early! ■

Rosemary Milne

A publication together with sound tapes and a video recording of the event are all in preparation and will be available later in the year.

Strathclyde Strike

SOCIAL WORK

We wonder how many readers were in fact aware that a strike of Senior Social Workers in Strathclyde Region lasted for ten weeks up till mid January.

The strike ended on the eve of action planned by other Social Work staff who planned to offer a 'life and limb' service only, and with the services of ACAS. The expectation was that the serious implications for some of the most vulnerable children and families would be aggravated further by the dispute intensifying.

Senior social workers whose dispute it was, were never under any illusions about their chances of winning outright. The fight seemed to be more about standing up to the heavy-handed centralist management style of their department than about the regrading claim which started it all off.

Senior social workers in Strathclyde, by the authority's own statistics, bear the practical difficulties on the first line of management of providing a social work service to some of the country's most vulnerable individuals and families living

many of them in chronic poverty. They were all too aware of the impact of a reduced service on a public which depends on them so heavily.

It must be a measure of the strength of their feeling, that in spite of this, they remained determined to expose the sham of a so-called 'caring department' that refuses to care for its own workers.

There have been allegations about authoritarianism in senior social work management in other regions in Scotland in previous issues of *Scottish Child*. It

seems more widespread than we perhaps care to acknowledge. It results not only from the personalities involved but from the creation of structures which turn managers into remote experts.

Recent history shows that rigid structures have a habit of cracking because they cannot bend. It is to be hoped that in the weeks to come in the aftermath of this dispute, management will somehow learn to value the staff they ask to do a difficult and demanding job. The well-being of so many Strathclyde families depends on it. ■

Derek Rodger

Changing the Change

MENOPAUSE

Many thousands of women, in the approach and entry to middle age, find themselves in the seemingly uncharted waters of a problematic menopause. All too often, the frustrations and concerns developing from the physical changes that affects women in the run up towards, during and beyond the end of regular monthly periods, are exacerbated by a combination of ignorance and patronising dismissal of any and all ensuing problems. "It's just your age" has frequently been the proffered explanation for difficulties as common and as varied as headaches, nerves and weight gain.

The lack of help for women going through the menopause was the spur behind the birth of the 'Change the Change Campaign'. Launched over a year ago, the campaign has sought to increase awareness of the menopause, particularly, though not exclusively, amongst women, through the availability of good quality information and advice for women of all ages. This has been coupled with highlighting the need for a special menopause clinic and a training programme for GPs, frequently amongst the worst offenders in putting down middle-aged women's complaints to the 'mid-life crisis'.

Anne Robertson, a founder member of the campaign, said "Over the past year we have been getting women together and have established several self-help groups. It's difficult to know the extent of the problem, but I had my phone number on a

leaflet and, over one weekend, took 150 calls from women experiencing problems".

Significantly, since the campaign started, there are now two doctors specialising in the meno-

majority can experience disturbing symptoms. After a reasonably healthy life, they are plunged into a distressing process of hot flushes, sweating, vaginal dryness and irritability. These physical symptoms, if

over which the symptoms are spread, believing it to be only over a matter of months. However, the signs can develop 3-4 years before the periods end for good, and up to 1-2 years after.

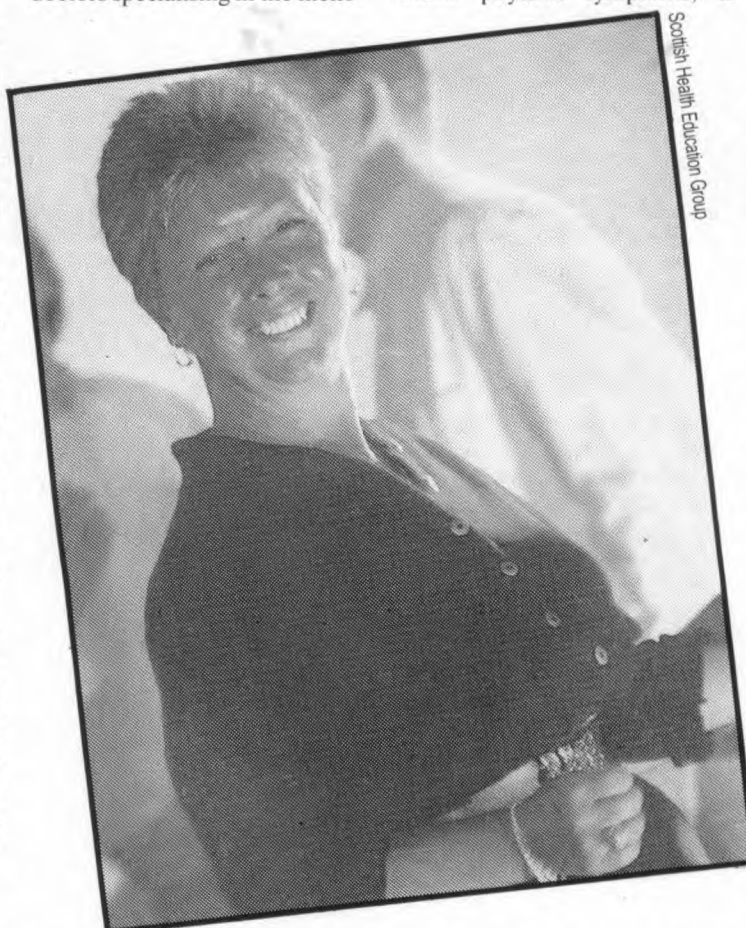
There are positive aspects to the menopause in the ending of periods and the subsequent lack of worry over pregnancy. But it is no wonder such considerations are lost if a woman doesn't understand what is happening, why, and what action to take in order to be in control at that stage of life.

The menopausal process is surrounded by myth, and ignorance has been the soil in which it has flourished. The 'Change the Change Campaign' aims to redress the balance and make the negative images of the menopause a thing of the past. The message of the campaign is that bodies such as the Health Board, the Health Education Department and the District and Regional Councils should help women who want to set up support groups.

In the face of continuing cuts and attacks on the Health Service in general, the campaign is an inspired example of women organising together to confront a matter of real concern - expanding knowledge of the menopause so that women can confront it with confidence, not endure it with distress.

If you want to join or be involved in initiating a self-help group, you can contact Anne Robertson on 031 554-7961. ■

Joe Owens



pause at the Family Planning Clinic in Edinburgh's Dean Terrace.

Women commonly stop having periods between the ages of 45 and 54 and, whilst about 20% notice no problem at all, the

coupled with a general lack of sympathy and understanding from husbands and partners, can render the process deeply harrowing.

Many women are also surprised at the length of time



That Other World . . .

DREAMS

Just when the dream life of a substantial proportion of the nation might well be dominated by persecutory fantasies involving burly sheriff's officers selling their possessions in the street, a timely little book on dreaming reaches us.

Brenda Mallon's **Children Dreaming** is a comprehensive study of children's dreams based on a survey of hundreds of children throughout the U.K.

Judy (14) from Northern Ireland had nightmares about

"someone coming into our house and killing my dad . . . they kill everyone except me and my dog. And I have to live alone in my house." One young child believed he dreamt in order to rewind his memory.

It appears that we actually begin dreaming in the womb and because dreaming is so much a part of mental development, it is generally accepted that children spend up to double the amount of time in dreaming compared to adults.

Brenda Mallon argues that it is in their dreams that many chil-

dren attempt to come to terms with the emotional experiences that adults have in some way accepted as part and parcel of life. Traumatic events such as death, divorce and changing school all had a high count in the recollected dream life of her sample of children.

Nightmares she found, can occur when a child is confused about what is happening. Often when a loved one dies, children are not fully told what has happened and questions remain unanswered resulting in the fearful fantasies that cause bad

dreams.

63% of those participating in the survey reported experiencing nightmares, and Mallon argues for honest sensitive answers on important issues, since they can prevent the anxieties that lead to sleepless nights. Listening to children's dreams she says, – poll tax collectors notwithstanding – may help the promise of brighter tomorrows come true. ■

Sara Evans

Children Dreaming – Brenda Mallon Penguin £3.99.

CONNECTIONS

OUT-LINE

The youngest of our four children left her local authority primary school last year to go to a private school. Although in the top set of primary 2 in her state school, she had already been judged by two independent schools as being about one year behind their slowest children of the same age.

At such an early stage, this kind of discrepancy in attainment should not be regarded as very significant. Obviously the private sector schools have smaller classes and a pre-selected group of children whose parents are expected to be involved and supportive.

The problem is that these fundamental differences in skills attainment between the two systems do not seem to level out at later stages in the primary school. Our two eldest children emerged from primary school unable to write anything with appropriate capital letters, full stops or commas, and had no notion of the function of a sentence or a paragraph. In one case spelling was atrocious; with the other haphazard.

I would not suggest for a moment that creative writing is to be judged on the basis of an ability to punctuate or spell, but there is a point where the quality of the content is severely impaired by obscure spelling and lack of grammatical organisation. After nearly two years in an independent school, they are beginning to learn the basic rules, which surely should have been introduced at an earlier stage.

What is proving more difficult for them is that they have no study skills whatsoever. Their primary school had given no homework, and when they left at the age of 11, they had no experience of preparing for or sitting a formal test or exam.

It is our younger son, however, who has suffered most. He was 8 before we brought to the school's attention that there might be a problem. His reports and class teachers had never indicated anything was wrong, but Ralph himself was becoming more and more depressed by his performance at school. He had decided he was stupid.

We, belatedly, took him for assessment by an educational



Stewart Asquith

Unnatural Selection

psychologist who reported that he had a high intelligence but wondered what on earth the school was doing with him. We are still asking ourselves that question. What is happening in an education system where qualified and experienced teachers apparently cannot distinguish between a slow learner and a bright child who is underachieving to a serious degree?

After a year's remedial attention, Ralph sat a test and was turned down for the independent school which his elder brother and sister now attend. We were informed that his test performance was not up to the

required standard, and that the school was not interested in accepting children with a problem. He is now attending another independent school which is prepared to accept pupils on the basis of potential as well as attainment.

Ralph was lucky. What is terrifying to reflect is how many other children there are like him, but whose parents cannot mount a rescue operation.

This rather awful family case history raises several questions. Firstly, what did we as parents do wrong? We were committed to the idea of State education,

and exercising our rights under the Parent's Charter selected the children's primary school with care. It appeared to be a school with a balanced social mix and had a reputation for encouraging creativity. We mistakenly assumed it would also teach reading writing and maths to the appropriate standard.

Were we just unlucky, or is this school typical of what is happening in local authority primaries? Is it a result of a severe lack of resources and low morale, or has it to do with educational theory and poor teacher training?

Certainly the situation is particularly bad in Edinburgh. The city has a very large proportion of private schools which most middle class children attend, and the two systems seem to operate from different standpoints. Children in the private sector will be pushed and cajoled, and although of course some fight against this, at least they have some exam passes behind them when they rebel. The state system seems neither prepared nor equipped to put itself out for the vast majority who are not highly motivated.

When the teaching profession is, as a whole, depressed undervalued and underpaid, this is perhaps hardly surprising. Maybe the Edinburgh situation can point to what may happen elsewhere under government plans. In education as elsewhere the private sector has been flourishing. As dissatisfaction with local authority schools grows, and as waiting lists for private schools lengthen, the private sector can be very selective about who they take. As one system gets fat the other grows lean.

If local authority schools in Scotland are allowed to 'opt out', will this two class education situation accelerate? What seems clear is that the real losers will be the children who remain in the depleted and demoralised local authority schools.

Meanwhile we are committed to paying upwards of £11,000 per annum in fees for a service that other European countries regard as every individual's right and the State's responsibility. ■

Elizabeth McClelland

Out-Line is a regular feature where readers write about any aspect of Scotland growing up.

IN BRIEF

We're all **Europeans** now, aren't we? a few years ago the Common Market was about as exciting a topic to your average person-in-the-street as last week's shipping forecasts. But that's all changed now. The ad men have been busy on this one, and there can be few of us who haven't starting feeling a bit more, well, *good* about being in this part of the world. Europe, that is. And of course Our Leader's opposition to the whole thing does tend to make a lot of people think there must be something in it. So it may seem churlish to mention it, but fraternal progress toward greater prosperity and freedom may not be the whole story as far as Europe is concerned.

The European Community recently held its first ever conference on youth homelessness, and **Scottish Child** was invited to Brussels to attend. It was an appalling affair. No one seemed to know what they were doing there, and if you asked simple questions you got a reply in what is called 'Euro-Speak', an incomprehensible way of talking that avoids ever being straight about anything.

One of the interesting things about conferences like this is how often they actually display the very problems they are supposedly there to sort out. There we all were talking about young people being marginalised, faced with monolithic bureaucracies, having no way of controlling things – in a conference where people were being patronised, ignored and abused by bureaucrats who clearly weren't going to be effected by anything we said. The inevitable half dozen Token Teenagers had the good sense to walk out, protesting that the thousands of pounds spent on such a badly organised conference could have provided food and shelter for homeless teenagers.

The conference did end with a proposal to ask the various bodies of the European Community to do something about youth homelessness. However it was

pointed out that the Charter of Rome and the Social Charter nowhere mention housing, so there's not a lot that can be done! As 1992 sees the freeing up of capital and labour movement around Europe, the present rush of young Scots to London for work might seem small fry indeed compared with what is to come. And if it's left up to the EC to do something about it, we could still be waiting for the provisional draft agenda of the relevant consultation paper as we enter the next millenium. ■

Researchers at Edinburgh University have been monitoring the effect of the Adoption Freeing Order in speeding up and simplifying the **adoption** process. Their findings indicate that so far it has been much less successful than was hoped in achieving its aims.

If a court grants a Freeing Order on a child, the child's birth parents lose all parental rights in relation to the child and their agreement to the child's adoption is no longer required. Not surprisingly, many parents do therefore contest the taking of this Order. The delays which arise are partly the result of the careful preparation needed by social workers and lawyers in presenting their case in the face of this opposition. The research also points the finger at court timetabling. Cases are sometimes continued from month to month before a judgement is reached. It may not be generally realised that from the date of the Freeing petition being lodged with the court, most children will wait well over a year to be placed in an adoptive family.

The Child Care Law Review has made some recommendations about tightening up time-limits for this kind of case. It is proposed that uncontested cases should be decided within 12 weeks, contested ones within 6 months. The researchers argue strongly for these time-scales to be treated as a maximum permissible rather than the norm.

The full research report is ob-

tainable from John Tresiliotis at the Department of Social Policy and Social Work, Edinburgh University. ■

A first national conference held by the **Enuresis** Resource and Information Centre in London at the end of 1989, brought together delegates from all parts of the British Isles. The conference papers can be bought from the Centre which has also published two guides for professionals: *A Guide to Enuresis* (£9.50+£1.05 p+p), and *A Guide to Enco-presis* (£7+£1p+p).

The guides contain information on a range of aspects, including the effects of bedwetting on the child and family, the choice of treatment methods and dealing with relapses.

The address to write to for any of these publications or for general enquiries is ERIC, 65 St Michael's Hill, Bristol BS2 8DZ Tel 0272 264920 ■

One vital aspect of the Self-Determination and Power event which should not, in our setting, be lightly dismissed, is the fact that it was jointly managed. How do you manage an international event over two days – in all its trivial and not so trivial complexities – if not by first of all managing yourself?

And when more than one organisation is involved, the room for inter factional rivalry and dispute is of course greater. In what at the event itself, was referred to as '**the fratricide factor**', it is not uncommon in our public life, for parties with ostensibly similar oppositional interests, instead of combining for strength, to slide into mutually debilitating infighting.

Though always cordial and constructive, it wasn't as if the planning and organisation process for the Govan event was always cuddly at every stage of its dealings. Some applicants, it seems, couldn't bring themselves to write to Scottish Child. Several envelopes were addressed Free University c/o Scottish Child. Insignificant?

It enabled the organisers to explore the issue of just who was seen to be getting the credit, who was 'in charge', and the whole issue of the (often gender differentiated) split between who does the donkey work and who fronts the thing. All of the applications so addressed, for the record, were from males. Tripping over ourselves to get into some real intellectual meat? – not wanting to get involved with silly mundane practical things like children, chaps?

However, having acknowledged and dealt with such things beforehand, they weren't half the hassle when the exact same issues came up during the event. So it should not pass without notice that Free University, Edinburgh Review and ourselves appear to have come out of this joint venture not only with our respective integrities intact, but all arguably strengthened by the experience. From our side it was, in fact, a pleasure. ■

There is a fine irony about some of the **sponsorship** in the first Scottish International Children's Festival, taking place in Inverleith Park, Edinburgh from 29th May to 3rd June this year. The programme is out now for what is described as a 'festival of theatre, music, mime, dance and puppetry from around the world'. Send for it to 22 Laurie Street, Edinburgh EH6 7AB.

You will see that **Safeways** are providing a creche and mother's room, complete with trained nursery staff and play leaders. Never mind that in the real world of the supermarket, the nearest they get to child-centred shopping is the provision of wire-mesh baskets on wheels and a customer carry-out service.

The Workshop Programme is sponsored in its entirety by BP and includes, of all things an Ecology Pavilion.

The Festival is a microcosm of present day treatment of the arts. Have a nice time, everyone, big business is there to help. ■

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THIS DIARY

Unsolicited Decency

At a recent 'cultural' evening in Dundee Arts Centre, I was one of a group of scribblers invited to give readings from their works. When my turn came the windows and doors were duly nailed shut and the audience tied to their seats – precautions which the organisers thought prudent as I am considered to be a bit on the gloomy side when it comes to story telling.

True to form, my piece was on my two favourite subjects – death and, well, . . . dying. The audience struggled with their bonds and ground their teeth throughout, but I managed to make myself heard above the din. No sooner had I finished when, by way of an antidote, a friend quickly weighed in with a humorous poem. It was called 'Pessimisto', and he dedicated it to me. 'Pessimisto' is an astrologer who tells it like it is. He advises Pisceans to stay in bed for the day or disaster will befall them. Sagittarians are warned against postponing that visit to their mother as the old girl is about to curl up her toes any day now. While for Scorpios there is nothing at all to be said as theirs are horrors which even Pessimisto refuses to describe.

I watched as the audience fell about laughing. I wasn't hurt, nor was I angry. For my friend had been accurate in linking Pessimisto's disposition with my own. I do have rather a bleak outlook on life.

There are many reasons for this. Spending the first thirty four years of my life in Greenock, for example, hasn't helped. During that period the colour of my universe consisted of varying shades of grey. The dominant element was rain, and the pre-eminent sensation was of a dank uncomfortable dampness that left the spirits sodden.

Nor has my present biological location done much to encourage optimism. Slap bang in the middle of the male menopause, each day brings a new resentment. The enthusiasm of others seems incomprehensible, frivolous and ultimately, detestable. What right has anyone to be happy when I'm degenerating into a saggy baggy wrinkled greying and insecure wreck? What right!

But the most important thing contributing to my despair has been the experience of being a socialist in the 1980s – watching as the social and political arrangements that I believed in, and hoped that one day would bring about a just society, were first of all ridiculed by the free marketeers, rejected by large sections of the electorate, and dismantled by the present government.

In the new age I watched in utter astonishment as hucksters in business suits sat and calmly spoke of the need for 'cost-effective' health care. I listened incredulously as cyclical unemployment was novelly interpreted by Tebbit to mean an unwillingness on the part of the unemployed to peddle their way to new jobs. Daily, it seemed, and for ten years, I

"By the time Mrs Thatcher decreed that 'there's no such thing as society', I was ready to agree with her."

read or was told of or experienced some fresh defeat of the ideals and principles I had taken for granted. The humiliation of the miners; the selling off of national assets; the introduction of industrial relations legislation that made the effective representation of working people all but impossible.

And three times this version of new Britain was endorsed at the polls. Three times the small, mean, petit-bourgeois exponents of an arid market philosophy were returned to parliament, to my television screen, my newspaper, my radio, from whence they could smile and write and talk about their awful mission in terms of its inevitable success. By the time Mrs. Thatcher decreed that 'there is no such thing as society', I was ready to agree with her, for what was her government if not the expression of the greedy, uncaring, selfish attitude which had gripped us. And who, I ask myself, could be optimistic at such a time?

You can imagine my surprise therefore, when I lately witnessed an incident which, at the very least, has caused me to reflect on my pessimism. It wasn't a momentous

event. Quite the contrary. I might even have missed it but for the circumstances in which it occurred.

A colleague had been taken ill during a class, and I was asked to 'baby sit' till the end of the session. Having nothing to do I was able to sit and watch the students working. They were collating information from a survey they'd conducted, and making up graphs meant they would have to use rulers. I had noticed that one of the girls was disabled and wondered how she would manage the task. I waited and watched.

As the girl worked, she and a friend kept up a lively conversation – about things in general. Without breaking from the dialogue, the disabled girl picked up her ruler and laid it on the page. Her friend moved her chair round and held the ruler in place while she drew the requisite lines.

No request for help had been made, no offer had been given. It had just happened. One human being helping another. And all the while the conversation never faltered, was never even directed to the activity they were actually engaged in. They just smiled and chatted as if it were the most natural thing in the world.

And I got to wondering where did this fit in with the philosophy of self-interest? It could be said of course that the girl who helped out her friend acted out of selfishness. That she was storing up goodwill which she could call on if she ever found herself in need of help. But it seems to me that any philosophy which depends on that kind of sophistry . . . well, stinks.

For what benefit was accruing to the girl. No one, other than myself was watching, and she was unaware of that. There was, in the words of the huckster, 'nothing in it for her'. But she did it just the same.

A drowning man will, as they say, clutch at straws. But it seems to me that I witnessed something basic in that classroom. Something which has survived our worst market oriented excesses. We might call it human decency. And if it has survived thus far, perhaps . . . there's just a chance . . . that it will withstand and win out against the onslaught of the greedy who govern us. ■

Daniel Boyle

Some children can't easily communicate. **Janette Montague** outlines her work with children through the medium of music. Photographs by **Julia Morris**.

Laura walks into the room and sits down heavily on a chair. She is larger than life, loud, now in her early teens, and a problem to those who care for her. She shouts and can be aggressive.

But there are two elements in her make-up that the music therapist can work with. The loud shouts and demands are habitual, and superficial. They have served her well commanding immediate attention and recognition. They also provide well-trying cover for the other Laura, the quiet whimpering sobbing baby Laura who whines for affection and sustenance. The various strands have to be sorted out, evaluated, considered.

I decided to engage the 'baby' Laura, the part that is terribly deprived, naked of last-

ing and trusting relationships, and devoid of expressive opportunity. Her expression of these facets is through barely audible vocal sounds which resemble the whimper of a baby beginning to stir. They happen infrequently among the only too audible shouts and demands.

The loud Laura is allowed to be but I do not engage with it. The whimpering Laura which surfaces infrequently, I engage immediately and noticeably. The engaging is done vocally by joining her on or around her pitched sounds, or on an instrument, accompanying and nurturing her small sounds, valuing and holding them like the most precious and delicate of pearls. Having been laid aside for so long, they are rusted, decayed, cast aside as rubbish, while the large bossy demanding Laura has held

SOUNDS ALIVE



sway. The task of bringing these small offerings out, examining them, resurrecting and sustaining them, has to be executed with sensitivity and responsibility. Initially in a one hour session, only one or two 'contacts' may be made, and on some days they may be so far buried and uncontactable that little headway is made.

However, with patience and the embedded belief that every person alive has a right and a capacity to express self under the right circumstances, one can work steadily at breaking down barriers and helping the very roots of being to find a new existence and a new way of surviving.

Perhaps predictably, as the therapy progresses, the small once insignificant sounds become more audible, more frequent, more



▶ alive. Together we compose a piece of music – equal partners in an improved whole. Each takes up and works with the cues of the other. The old bossy shouts recede, making way for the emergence of suppressed feelings and anxieties. Real needs are identified and addressed and Laura has come nearer to finding herself. The vocal sounds, the guitar chords, were only a means to an end and yet they seemed to reach far beyond words, and to be safer than words.

Karen, ten years old, living with her parents and two brothers, has never spoken a word, and habitually hits her own head hard, with her hand. This distresses those who watch it. Karen looks tense, angry, frustrated. Nothing seems right in her world.

In the music therapy room she glances round, transiently, as if things might have changed between glances. It feels as if she is searching, desperately demanding, and literally banging her head in a frenzied frustrated attempt to make sense of her world. Her arm is encased sometimes in a cut up washing-up liquid bottle intended to keep the elbow straight and reduce attacks on her head. I take her arm gently and lead it to the piano keys. She immediately removes it and wrestles again with the plastic in another futile attempt to go for her head. We persevere over the sessions until she 'tolerates' the presence of the piano and even seems fleetingly interested in it.

I offer it as a channel for her the expression of her incredible rage, her desperate



helplessness, and as an alternative to her self abuse and considerable injury. The day comes when she lashes down on the keys, hammering as if to annihilate them altogether. I accompany her wild improvisation with strong, solid, steady chords, low down on the piano. I aim to support, hold, accept, facilitate the process of her release from the prison that is her head.

In our music, iron bars can be heard to snap, footsteps of hope and promise appear and disappear and a dreadful wailing emerges, born on a bed of despair. The improvisation ends by pure chance in the Aolian

mode. We have been through death and back again.

My skills as a therapist and my experience as a musician have been tested to contain Karen and her conflicts. The room reverberates with the devastating music. Karen throws me a fleeting glance and looks exhausted and relieved. She touches the piano before walking from the room.

Stewart and Colin are at opposite ends of a continuum. Stewart, aged 5, commands no say in the ordering of his world, rarely makes a choice, is sweet and lovable and manages to manipulate the entire family

into attending to his every need. When greatly encouraged he will play the 'sweet' glockenspiel.

Colin on the other hand is nine and lives in a fast action-packed world which includes a repertoire of 'over the chairs, up the curtains, hit the cat, knock over a cup of tea, and poke your eye.' He is unpopular with all who encounter him. My first session with him was taken up largely with him trying to get inside a tumbadora (large African drum) or alternately trying to upturn the instruments – the bigger the better. His music when he eventually played a large rotary timpani was unbelievably loud. Whenever I joined him in it or felt a moment of contact, he was swift to change the rhythm. Or he would throw the stick away – sometimes in my direction – and so avoid any attempt to meet on equal terms.

Whereas people are practised in hiding behind words, it is infinitely more difficult to erect a pretence in the music one improvises. My task is to make it safe for the masks to be laid aside and then to work with the often fragile and frightening material that lies beneath.

Also to nurture, to aid development and strive towards the fulfilling of potential. Mark is two and lovable with a thing about glasses, silent with little hint of babbling. The witness of traumatic events, he perhaps senses the merits of keeping quiet, engages in silent music therapy with one or two very small musical events in a half hour session. Things must progress at his pace.

"Music therapy can give everyone a seat in the orchestra."



And there's Catriona. Catriona is twelve, walks with a wide unsteady gait, spoke some words once but can no longer. She used to hold toys but can't any longer – her hands and fingers move incessantly every minute of her waking hours. She is described as 'profoundly mentally handicapped'. The most surprising fact about Catriona's history is that until she was around a year old, she was considered a normal baby. A regression took place and years later she was diagnosed as having the Rett Syndrome.

In music therapy Catriona has stilled her incessant hand movement long enough to produce sounds on the bodhran. She has used the stereotyped finger movements to play the harp, psaltery, swarmandal and santoor. She has recognised my vocalisations as a response to her own and welcomed the opportunity to communicate in 'her' language. She has been aware that Monday is music day. She has recognised the therapy room and the people in it. We have held eye contact long enough for me to experience the awareness, the character, the potential and the person who lies within the syndrome.

Music therapy – for the young child perhaps brain damaged from birth, for the school child either passively cocooned or leading a merry dance, for the self-mutilating child, the near teenager seemingly trapped behind beautiful eyes, or for the adolescent who has developed destructive survival strategies – in making contact with those who are otherwise not readily contactable, can give everyone a seat in the orchestra. ■



Punishment L

January 2nd, the beginning of the last decade of the century and punishment is the lead story on the front page of the morning paper. Three columns describing government proposals for a system of 'punishment in the community' which will, so we are assured, 'change the judicial culture'.

Chance would be a fine thing! The judges only have to step inside the average Scottish school if they want some lessons in the durability and adaptability of punitive cultures. In the panic and hyperbole which surrounded the proposals to phase out the belt in Scottish schools in the 1980s, the teachers' unions declared it would only be practicable if the reform went hand in hand with the introduction of other punitive stratagems for dealing with 'bad children'.

Then as now, no-one stopped to ask whether it was worth first of all, doing a 'punishment audit'. The concept of punishment itself as a response to wrong or harmful behaviour remains beyond criticism or debate except by fringe 'liberal' elements.

In the summer of last year the Scottish Child Law Centre held a conference on
16 Scottish Child February/March 1990

child sexual abuse which attracted a capacity audience of hundreds. A few months later a well-publicised conference on the physical punishment of children run by the same organisation, brought together no more than a handful of interested adults.

Scottish Child itself has often seemed to be preoccupied with the experiences of the

Unlike the sexual abuse of children, punishing children – hitting them, humiliating them verbally, putting them metaphorically and quite often literally, 'outside the door' – is not behaviour calculated to arouse universal revulsion in adults. In fact, if the experience of the Child Law Centre is anything to go by, it arouses very little interest at all.

The more that alternatives to custody, the abolition of the belt, or the ethics of smacking are discussed, the more, argues **Rosemary Milne**, that the dubious concept of punishment remains unchanged.

sexually abused child to the exclusion of all other groups of injured children. This bias is a reflection of what people are writing about. The coverage given to the problem of sexual abuse represents only tiny fraction of the material submitted for publication. It goes without saying that **Scottish Child** has not been snowed under by articles on the smacking of children by parents; nor any interesting analyses of the alternative forms of punishment being used in schools now that the belt is no longer permitted.

There is still powerful support for the belief that 'moderate chastisement' is a good and necessary tool in the upbringing of children. It is a means of ensuring that the child has imprinted on its mind as well as its body the norms of behaviour that society expects of it.

Besides having this formative function attributed to it, various other reasons are given for why punishment is both necessary and inevitable. In general its necessity is



ives

said to lie in its usefulness as a deterrent, its inevitability in the state's or the individual's desire, regrettable perhaps, for revenge.

When a theory persists in spite of overwhelming evidence against its validity, it is undoubtedly time to start asking what are its purposes, other than those to which it lays claim. What is it that leads a government which has staked its reputation on the introduction of market-forces into social and health care to spend vast amounts of public money on building institutions which are known to be ineffective in controlling criminality? What is it that now leads them to redefine the work of social workers, youth workers and probation officers with offenders as primarily about punishing?

The deterrence theory of punishment persists, not because people are deterred from wrongdoing by being punished but because those who punish are supplied with a quasi-rational justification for punishing which allows them to go on doing it. It does this by reinforcing their feeling of detachment from the

victim. The aim is to conceal or minimise the revenge motive, which hints too much of sadism and sexuality ('I hate doing this but it's for your own good').

We are used by now to the idea that the torturer denies his victim's shared humanity in order to terrorise and maim him. But we are not yet willing to consider that the same processes are at work in punishment of a less vicious kind. Alice Miller was one of the first to suggest that punishing – and punishing children particularly – relies on the willingness of the adults dispensing it to cut themselves off from the memory of the pain they themselves experienced when undergoing punishment as children.

It is an emotion of a rare intensity which needs to mask itself like this. Consider the revolutionary implications of explaining the insult to the social order, the pain of injury, the outrage at seeing one's authority flouted as no more than contributory factors in the desire to punish. Would punishment still maintain its grip on the national psyche if it were accepted that its roots lay deeper in the punisher's **own** sense of worthlessness and wrongness first experienced as a child and never contradicted? Self-hatred turned outward on the next generation. It's an idea almost too challenging to contemplate that a nation's reluctance to give up punishing might spring, even in part, from the collective anger and despair of its adult members, the legacy of their own childhood experiences.

In her book *Lost in Translation*, Eva Hoffman describes a young friend of her early childhood in Poland.

"I particularly like the Twardowski's daughter, Basia, who is several years older than I. . . She wants to study medicine and she shows me books with horrific drawings

Finding Out

The woman's face thrust into his, eyes bulging, the arch of her lip, stretched thin, screaming, screaming. His brow wrinkled – why had they come and was the row because his school-pal's coat was ripped? The tongue of cloth hung sadly down; fascinated he reached out to touch – her fingers knifed against his chest; his hand fell limply by his side. "It was only new last week!" she screeched. "I'd give him a hiding if I was you!" Adult tantrums end at last . . . Patiently he waited . . . "I never – " "I know. It's all right," his mother sighed. Her fingers lightly brushed his neck, straightening the house key on its string. Stroking his hair, she led him to their flaking kitchen, thimble-size. "It's your favourite for tea." At times in her heart she craved support, but she had always been alone – a truth that he has yet to learn.

Allan Barber

of body parts and diseases, and I talk to her about questions that occupy me deeply, such as whether it would be worse to die yourself or to have someone close to you die first. But then, one day when I go to her apartment to borrow something, I find Basia in the middle of being spanked: she is stretched across her father's lap – she is about sixteen at the time – and he is methodically applying a leather strap to her behind. He doesn't stop when I come in, and, not knowing what to do, I stand there through this humiliation, until Basia is allowed to walk away. After that she does not talk to me in the old friendly way."

What became of Basia? Did she grow into a depressed and anxious woman, a 'keep-it-all-inside' coper, an angry, tongue-lashing, pain-inflicting tyrant? How would we evaluate the long-term consequences of her disciplining in the 'punishment audit'?

What kind of a doctor, what kind of a parent, what kind of a government minister do you make if throughout your childhood you've been given regular reminders of your badness?

The question remains unanswered as much by politicians as by the anti-smacking lobby. It's the removal of the right to **smack**, not the right to **punish** that the latter have in their sights.

The culture of punishment flourishes as never before. And will no doubt continue to do so as long as it can evade the chilling light of rational analysis. In fact on present performance there's a fair chance it will have eased its way to the centre of virtually every aspect of social life by the year 2000. ■

The Editor welcomes letters or reply articles on any aspect of the notion of punishment.

TAKING CHARGE

With editorials appearing only twice in the last year, nobody can accuse **Scottish Child** of telling its readers what to think.

But the start of a new decade does call for some comment about the present and the possibilities for the future.

As people have seen off the 1980s, there has been much drawing of breath. The 80s have been widely dismissed as a period of unrestrained greed and selfish acquisition. So what hope then for change in the 90s?

To be sure there is much pious rhetoric in government and the big bureaucracies of business and public administration about caring. In inverse proportion, you might say, to the lack of that quality evident in our daily experience.

Glasgow may be Europe's City of Culture this year, but it is also a city where thousands of families find it hard to scrape together the means just to carry on. If you think this fact is boring, that 'the poor are always with us' and there's nothing can really be done to change that, then you're probably reading the wrong magazine.

Talk of 'caring' is often just so much hot air. Many people in Scotland go on living unrewarding lives, in or on the margins of poverty. Children and their parents go on being abused. The weakest in our society carry the burden of decisions made by powers that feel, and are, remote and arbitrary.

And precisely because they are not equipped or organised to answer back, children and young people are amongst the worst treated of the lot.

Scottish Child exists to cut through the bland categorisation of children as ungrateful brats, marketing targets or romanticised objects. **Scottish Child** seeks to allow the experience of the young – in all its variety, pain and potential – to speak for itself.

In our political context and culture this is no mean ambition. It goes against many of the ways we relate to children. It challenges a society which fails to provide even the basics for so many. It opposes many aspects of an education system which cherishes the notion of the expert, and is often confined to narrow, self-interested career goals.

But things are on the move. The speakers and contributors at our recent Self-Determination and Power event were all too aware of the tasks and obstacles. Noam Chomsky, the keynote contributor talked about the intellectual elite being "the most indoctrinated sector of society." It's their role as a kind of secular priesthood, he argued, "to really believe the nonsense they put forth." Many participants at this event argued for a more egalitarian approach to knowledge and hence to power. Many asked for more of this kind of talk – more discussion unfettered by narrow factional interest. So we know there is a healthy and growing interest in opposition to the received values of those who dominate our culture.

But it needs more than an act of faith to advance truth and the honesty of a child's enquiry. Ordinary people find it extraordinarily difficult to voice the problems they and their communities face, in a society where the media is almost completely

controlled by a small elite of well-heeled people who challenge nothing of importance. **Scottish Child** works against the centralisation and authoritarianism that pervades so much of our public life. Even though we know that in Scotland such attitudes are born often of a deep-rooted insecurity, we think they should be challenged. The child in us all, uncluttered by the imagined complexity of vested interests, can take charge.

The struggling lone parent, the teacher or social worker on the verge of burn-out and the teenager trying to come to terms with having been sexually abused are not 'exceptions' in our society. They, we, are all trying to make things better in situations where depression and cynicism can all too easily





take over. Unless, that is, we find the voice from within us to say 'enough is enough'. And it's not easy. We all know that.

The survival and development of an independent-minded magazine with a regard for honesty and a disdain for self-interested duplicity may not seem such a big deal. But it is something.

Alone of course, **Scottish Child**, or anyone else for that matter, doesn't stand a chance. Needless to say, we do not endear ourselves to market interests. We refuse for instance, to deliver readers in discrete and contained market categories to advertisers. We think people deserve better than that.

So its on you, the reader, the people, that our strength lies.

■ We want to hear from you – your letters and your articles – write in, phone us.

“The survival and development of an independent-minded magazine may not seem such a big deal. But it is something.”

■ We are putting out an appeal for new subscribers and supporters – see the insert in this issue and do whatever you can.

■ Order **Scottish Child** for your library, creche, workgroup, club, health centre, or school, or wherever you meet people; introduce the magazine to a friend.

■ Take part in the reader survey we are planning for the next issue to gauge reader response.

■ Look out for plans to set up the readers' discussion groups we have heard are wanted, as well as our training and other events.

We think children are too important to stay inside the pages of mother and baby magazines, teen magazines or the women's pages of newspapers. We think that is why you buy and read **Scottish Child**. Together we can take charge. ■

LOOKING BACK

a story by Tony Duffy.

Class 4e

Register Teacher Mr. Young

Name	D.O.B.
1. ARNOTT Charles	24.11.69
2. ASH Bernard	30. 4.69
3. BALLOCH Ian	21. 9.69
4. BURNS Robert	14. 8.69
5. DEVINE Garfield	30.10.69
6. GRAHAM Martin	24. 7.69
7. HARRISON George	10. 9.69
8. JOHNSTON Frank	12. 8.69
9. LUMSDEN Bing	14.12.69
10. SIMPSON Derek	28. 8.69
11. YOUNG Donald	16. 7.69
12. YOUNG Leslie	1. 7.69
1. BAXTER Samantha	27. 4.69
2. CAMERON Karla	18. 7.69
3. DONALDSON Denise	1. 5.69
4. FINLAY Susan	7. 6.69
5. GRAHAM Mary	15.10.69
6. RITCHIE Tanya	9. 1.69
7. SINGH Ranjeera	26. 6.69

62 Hill Rd
Duncraig
23.10.84

Dear Sir,

Bing was absnet form the school as I am away form my man the now and as the social security have not yet gave me a gyro I had no money to buy him shoes he is back now becase they have now sent the gyro and i have got him shoes. Hopping you will exuse him.

Wilma Lumsden

Wilma Lumsden (mother)

Craigview High School
Pupil's Name Bing Lumsden
Referred to A. Dawson (PT History)

Referral Form
Class 4e

By G. Temple

Date 25.10.84

Time Period 3

Details of Incident

When I reprimanded this pupil for not getting on with his work, he became insolent, refused to work and claimed I was picking on him. As he left the room he shouted abusive remarks and declared his intention of running away from the school. He did not attend his period four class and has presumably gone home. This is not the first time I have had occasion to reprimand this pupil; for the last week or so he has been a disruptive influence.

G. Temple

Gregor Temple (History)



THE BING LU

The Best Day of My Life

It was when i whent to elie with my uncle shug and we whent out to see in his boat and it was graet we caught a lot off mackrill and colding and sahte in the morning and at dinnertime i had my peace a pie and a sanwish my mum made me and uncle shug gav me a drink of his whiskey bottle it was graet i was drunk but not sick even with the waves as whell when we had our dinner we caught more mackrill and sathe but no more colding when i come hom uncle shug cleaned too mackrill one for mum and one for me we had them for tea the where graet that was teh best day of my life.
THE END BY BING LUMSDEN

PUPIL DETENTION SLIP

NAME Bing Lumsden CLASS 4e

TIME 3.50 – 5.00 DATE 1.11.84

REASON Persistent Lateness

PLACE Room 12

SLIP ISSUED BY A.D. Chalmers AHT

Child Guidance
Eastfield House
Forth Street
Duncraig



Rory McInnes

son's welfare in the past and should the situation deteriorate further it might be necessary to consider residential care. I sincerely hope that this will not prove necessary since, before these recent developments, Bing did show signs of benefitting from his school environment.

Recommendation

It is my view that Bing should continue to be treated, as far as possible, like any other school pupil. Participation in group activities should be encouraged and his remedial help should continue.

No further action should be taken at present. It is to be hoped that Bing's home life will improve soon. If it does I am confident that we shall see an end to his recent behavioural problems.

Yours sincerely,

Bruce McLaren (Educational Psychologist)

FRIENDS UNIT

Writing assignment

Write a description of someone you like very much.

(1) Preparation

Re-read the part of the story where Masie talks about her feelings for Sarah. Think about how she expresses her love for her grandmother and the words she uses to emphasise love and trust.

(2) Things to remember

Make sure you choose someone you are **really** fond of.

Think about what it is that makes you feel this way about the person.

(3) Remember to write in sentences, check your spelling, and make sure that you use paragraphs to structure your writing.

A discription of my mum

My mum is graet wel shes pretty nice looken and always quiet well dressed i suppose she maks me good food when shes in but if shes out i cuold mak it myself because she wuold leave me a not to say

dear Bing your is i the ovin just put it on very hot for 20 mins and have some juise to yours loving mum! When my dad was home she din't have a bofreind but hes away now so she has got a bofreind he is called peem i do'nt laik hime very much because he calls me a little whanker but mum leiks him so mabbe hes alright raelly any way my mum is a graet mum lik the say on the telly a supremum a graet cook and nise looken to!

THE END BY BING LUMSDEN

MSDEN FILE

1.11.84

Dear Ms. Davie

Bing Lumsden

Referred for re-assessment.
Intellectual grading: Dull

Test results C.A.: 14yrs 11mths
Reading Age 9yrs 2mths
Spelling Age 8yrs 10mths

Observations

Bing's intellectual performance has not changed since the last assessment apart from a very slight improvement in spelling. I un-

derstand, however, that you have requested a re-assessment for behavioural rather than educational reasons.

The recent lapses in Bing's school behaviour are, in my opinion, related to new problems which have arisen at home. His father is not living at home and is, in any case, the subject of a police investigation of a serious nature. Bing's mother has entered a relationship with a man who is resident at the house on a full time basis. The man makes no secret of the fact that he regards Bing as a nuisance and that he has absolutely no interest in his welfare. There is, at present, no direct evidence of physical cruelty but the possibility cannot be ruled out. Mrs. Lumsden has shown herself to be irresponsible about her



JULIA MORRIS
Photographer

Portraits and Events

031 332 6385

**BRITISH AGENCIES
FOR ADOPTION AND
FOSTERING SEMINAR**

**'FREEING FOR
ADOPTION'**

27TH FEBRUARY 1990

**VENUE: STRATHCLYDE
REGIONAL COUNCIL
COMMITTEE ROOMS,
20 INDIA STREET,
GLASGOW**

TIME: 5.30 – 7.30 P.M.

**CONTACT JANYS SCOTT,
BAAF, 40 SHANDWICK
PLACE, EDINBURGH TEL:
031-225 9285 FOR FURTHER
DETAILS**



DON'T PAY!

SCOTTISH FEDERATION OF ANTI-POLL TAX UNIONS

Craigview High School Guidance Report Form

Please return to Maria Davie (PT Guidance)

Pupil's Name Bing Lumsden
Class 4e

Teacher Reporting Mr. McNaughton (PT PE)
Date 6.11.84

Reason for Report

This boy is a complete waste of time. He never has PE kit - claims he can't afford it - and makes no effort to take part in any of the sports on offer to the fourth year. I gave him a detention for refusing to take part in a rugby game and he didn't turn up for it. I won't have him back in my department until he does a detention and gives me an undertaking that he'll turn up with kit and ready to take part in sports.

FRIENDS UNIT

Writing Assignment

Write a description of someone you like very much.

My Pal by Ian Balloch

I am writing about my pal. He is called Bing LUMSDEN. HE wears a jean jacket and jeans. Baggy jeans. He is not clever at school. But he is a good laugh and a good pal. He has got sort of sparkly eyes and a cheeky wee face.

And he is very good at tig. That is all about my best pal Bing.

"THE END"

Craigview High School
Guidance Report Form

Please return to Maria Davie (PT Guidance)

Pupil's Name Bing Lumsden
Class 4e

Teacher Reporting Christine O'Donnell
Date 6.11.84 APT English

Reason for Report

Bing's behaviour has deteriorated recently. Although he has always had difficulties with written English, he was friendly and co-operative in class and his work was showing some signs of improvement. He was a likeable boy and the class enjoyed his sense of fun. In the last few weeks he has become withdrawn and sulky and this is definitely out of character for him. Since the guidance staff did request that any behavioural problems should be communicated ASAP in Bing's case, I assume that he has a problem outside school which is affecting his behaviour. I hope it can be resolved soon.

MEMORANDUM

From A.D.Chalmers (AHT) To H.Gemmell (Rector)

I am sending a fourth year boy, B.Lumsden of 4e to see you. He was being disciplined by Mr.McNaughton but lost control of himself and ran out of the school swearing. He called Mr. McNaughton, among other things, a 'big gorilla' and a 'rotten bastard'. He was absent from school without a note or explanation for one day following this incident.

Craigview High School
Wemyss Road
Duncraig

15.11.84

Dear Mrs Lumsden,

Because of unsatisfactory behaviour in school, your son/daughter Bing has been placed in isolation within the school for one week from Mon. 19.11.84 to Fri. 23.11.84. Please make an appointment to visit the school in the next week to discuss this matter.

Yours faithfully,



H. Gemmell (Rector)

WORK FOR PUPIL IN ISOLATION ISSUED BY Christine O'Donnell

Name Bing Lumsden Class 4e

Date 24.11.84

Write a story about a 'super hero'.

(1) Read the three extracts about Batman, Superman and Spiderman.

(2) Read the poem 'Goodbat Nightman'.

(3) Remember to write in sentences, check your spelling, and make sure that you use paragraphs to structure your writing.

Bingman

Once there was a superhero he was called Bingman he could do any thing he whanted liek KILL TEACHERS and BIG BASTARD PE TAECHERS called mcsomething and BIG BASTARDS CALLED PEEM that think there tuogh he swops down from the sky and rips them with his supre clows that there guts fall out and there greet-an for mercy and sayn no suprebingman PLAESE NO but he kills them anyway and he laeves there bodys lyeng for the vulters to eat BECAUSE THERE ARE ALL FUCKEN BASTARDS PIGS and then he would go home to mum for his dinner.

THE END BY BINGMAN LUMSDEN

Child Guidance
Eastfield House
Forth Street
Duncraig DU7 6NF

28.11.84

Dear Ms Davie,

Bing Lumsden

Referred for a behavioural problem.

Tests were administered but no significant differences recorded. If detailed results are required, please request.

Observations

Since the last report of 1.11.84, Bing's domestic environment has grown steadily worse. My own visit to the household and the Social Worker's report confirm that Bing is now suffering physical cruelty almost certainly at the hands of the man now living with his mother. Bing's behaviour when I spoke to him about his problems showed that he is becoming increasingly disturbed and resentful about his situation.

Recommendation

In order to protect Bing's physical and mental health, I think it is imperative that Bing is taken into care for a short term at least. It is unfortunate but any delay might well mean that he could be badly injured or suffer severe mental disturbance. A temporary place has been found for Bing at the Woodside Assessment Centre and the social work department will contact you in a few days with further details.

Yours sincerely,



Bruce McLaren (Educational Psychologist)

Class 4e

Register Teacher Mr. Young

Name	D.O.B.
1. ARNOTT Charles	24.11.69
2. ASH Bernard	30. 4.69
3. BALLOCH Ian	21. 9.69
4. BURNS Robert	14. 8.69
5. DEVINE Garfield	30.10.69
6. GRAHAM Martin	24. 7.69
7. HARRISON George	10. 9.69
8. JOHNSTON Frank	12. 8.69
9. LUMSDEN Bing	14.12.69
10. SIMPSON Derek	28. 8.69
11. YOUNG Donald	16. 7.69
12. YOUNG Leslie	1. 7.69
1. BAXTER Samantha	27. 4.69
2. CAMERON Karla	18. 7.69
3. DONALDSON Denise	1. 5.69
4. FINLAY Susan	7. 6.69
5. GRAHAM Mary	15.10.69
6. RITCHIE Tanya	9. 1.69
7. SINGH Ranjeera	26. 6.69

END



The Words o' the Weavers

RADICAL RENFREW

Poetry from the French Revolution to the First World War by poets born, or sometime resident, in the County of Renfrewshire

Selected, Edited and Introduced by Tom Leonard

Polygon 1990

Sean Bradley

Introducing a collection of his poems in 1923, this was e e cummings' intimate address to his readers: 'The poems to come are for you and for me and are not for most people . . . You and I are human beings; most people are snobs.' Perhaps the poet's irony has got the better of me in this case, but I suspect the following is true: most people are not snobs; most people do not read poetry; probably most people who read poetry **are** snobs.

Should the reader wish to know why this is so, then I recommend a reading of Tom Leonard's introduction to the work of sixty little-known Renfrewshire poets. That of course is to encourage another dubious pa-

stime, that of reading introductions to poetry rather than the poetry itself. So, let's start with the poetry. These lines are from a long poem on the evils of drink by John Mitchell

But the poor man's son tho' clever
Frae his books and lair maun turn
And frae labour's turgid river
Refuse drag, and learn to mourn
(from 'Cautious Tam' c 1840)

Leonard might well wish the wean to drag the river forever and thereby save his soul and his self-respect; he says it is the teaching of Literature and the degradation of the spoken tongue that excludes us from 'the dialogue between one human being and another. And such a dialogue is all that Literature is.' The nineteenth century 'invention of Literature as a teachable 'subject' was the invention of Literature as a mystery – thus countering the democratic potential of the sudden expansion of literacy brought about by compulsory education . . . In fact the spread of education as a right to the people has paradoxically led to the deprivation from them of much they once held to be valid literature.'

This is Tom Leonard in verse:
its thi lang-
wij a thi
guhtr thaht hi
said its thi

langwij a
thi guhtr
awright fur
funny stuff
ur
Stanley Bax-
ter ur but
luv n science
n thaht naw
(Unrelated Incident (1))

A very common experience then, and a very personal one for Leonard, which makes the source of this current anthology all the more fitting: the Public Libraries to which he withdrew to discover literature for himself. As 'Writer in Residence' at Paisley Central Library he had time and the opportunity to discover the riches of 'that world you see over the librarian's shoulder.' The selection of poems in 'Radical Renfrew' is the result of his reading in the Library's poetry collection, anthologies and 'Paisley Pamphlets'. Restricting his choice of poets to those born or sometime resident in Renfrewshire, most are connected with the weaver's trade and all its vicissitudes.

Attend a' ye, wha on the loom
Survey the shuttle jinking,
Whase purse has aft be sucket toom
While Willie's scales war clinkin'.
A' ye that for some luckless hole

Ha'e paid (though right unwillin')
 To satisfy his hungry soul,
 A saxe pence or a shillin'
 For some fine day.
 (*Hollander or Lightweight*)

This kind of an attack on a cheating silk manufacturer landed Alexander Wilson in jail in 1793; and 'The Weaver's Lament' was written by William Finlayson on the occasion of the failed strike of 1810, an attempt to establish a legal minimum wage:

Ye Weavers cease to mourn an' grieve
 Can bitter sighs your case relieve?
 Nae mair let hope your hearts deceive,
 Fix'd is your fate
 Be thankfu' ye're allow'd to weave
 At ony rate.

But the anonymous writer of 'Paisley Politics; or Rab and Pate' was more pointed. This followed the massacre of anti-Corn Law protesters at Peterloo

Our Clergy too, a snivling pack,
 Amidst a nation's general wreck;
 Na, though our ain toom tripes hing slack
 Wi' bitter want,
 Set up their vile insulting clack,
 An' preach content.

There is an index of poetic themes to help the reader through and biographical information on the writers wherever possible. The editor chose not to set these poems in the context of Scottish poetry and the more I read, the more I wish he had. I can only surmise that he did not wish to enter into that kind of literary debate.

What Tom Leonard has done is to aid the possibility of 'dialogue'. Once you accept that Literature is based on universal equality of human existence, past and present, then you can travel in Literature, as a writer or as a reader, wherever you like. What makes this selection of poems 'radical' is not the political stance of the poets on particular issues (that varies considerably) but the literature of which it is a part – that which reflects society in all its turmoil and the everyday concerns and realities of its members.

Because a cold rage seizes one at whiles
 To show the bitter old and wrinkled truth
 Stripped naked of all vesture that beguiles,
 False dreams, false hopes, false masks and
 modes of youth;
 Because it gives some sense of power and
 passion
 In helpless impotence to try to fashion
 Our woe in living words howe'er uncouth.
 (*The City of Dreadful Night – James Thomson*)

In some parts of the world, poetry is still the witness of the oppressed, the voice of dissent. In a recent interview, the Czech poet Miroslav Holub said 'The big official lie stripped everyone of his own voice' and into that void stepped poetry, trespassing 'across the borderline of the typical poetry public to reach normal people'. This is an anthology for normal people. It is sad that few normal people will read it.

A Shilling in the Puir Man's Pouch

I hear folk talk o' guid kind frien's,
 I own I've felt the same;
 I've felt a guid turn done abroad,
 I've felt the like at hame.
 But this I saw, where'er I've been,
 That a shilling in a puir man's pouch
 Turned aye out his best frien'.
 I've travelled east, I've travelled west,
 O'er many a weary mile,
 And I hae seen ten times o' gloom
 For ae kind frien'ly smile.
 But this I felt where'er I went,
 In every place I've been,
 That a shilling in a puir man's pouch
 Turned aye out his best frie'.
 I've ta'en some cash at times mysel',
 Then frien's aroun' me cam',
 They deaved me with flattering tongues
 While circling roun' the dram.
 But when misfortune turned the wheel,
 I saw, wi' weel cleared een,
 That a shilling in a puir man's pouch
 Turned aye out his best frien'.

Robert Mutrie

A Song for the Working Man

Oh! ther's nothing in life so gay
 As labour and simple fare
 If you're able to pay your way
 Untroubled by cank'ring care.
 But labour beyond one's strength
 Turns work from joy to pain,
 And tasks of a cruel length
 May well make the brave complain.
 Ye friends of the working man,
 Who have brightened so many lives,
 Now bid them do all they can
 In striving to help their wives:
 It were a sin to oppress the strong-But why
 should weak women bear
 A day's task, for man too long,
 Anmd seldom his leisure share?
 Much good has surely been done,
 But much still remains to do;
 Then join in it every one,
 And carry the good work through.
 When the working man and his wife
 Spend together the leisure hour,
 The contentment of humble life
 Will be sweeter than wealth or power.

Marion Bernstein 1876

In Whose Interests?

In the days when divorce was the exception, rather than the commonplace experience of one in three marriages it is now, the general wisdom was that the kids would stay with mum. This assumed, and it shows the change in values that has happened in the last couple of decades, that mother would be the 'innocent' party.

The modern reality is that many divorces now proceed on the basis of a period of separation. While feelings may be sore, as far as the legal process is concerned, apportioning blame often doesn't now enter into it. There is an increasing legal recognition too, in these days of supposed sexual equality, of the rights of fathers and of their ability to care for young children.

emotional needs. So the general circumstances of all parties, their financial standing, the accommodation each can provide, the arrangements for the physical care of the child – all are important. But in reaching a decision, the question of emotional security rather than material provision will dominate. And in some cases the court will take account of wider issues, like the relationship of the child with other siblings and extended family.

The wishes of the child at the centre of the dispute will also be important, particularly where the child is older and clearly able to express a rational view. In such a case, the court will take account of the child's opinion, and this may be significant where there are other younger siblings to be considered.

In a divorce situation, where both parents seek custody of their child, how do the courts decide?

Such changes in popular values have led to some confusion in the event of the breakdown of a marriage. Fathers now assume a more automatic right to an award of custody, particularly when they have been the main 'provider'. Mothers can often fear that their lack of income potential will adversely affect their standing in the eyes of the court.

So how do courts adjudicate between parents on the question of custody? The paramount consideration is the welfare of the child involved. The court must not make a custody order unless satisfied that to do so will be in the interests of the child. And this involves an enquiry into all the circumstances before a decision can be reached.

Now of course, in a contested case both parents are arguing convincingly that the future welfare of the child best lies in their custody. Both may well be right. It seems important then to be aware of the factors a court will consider in reaching a decision.

Inevitably the existing relationship between parent and child will be crucial, as will the parent's ability to meet the child's long term physical and

When the balance of arguments between the parents seems even, the court will be reluctant to disturb the status quo. So if the child has lived with one parent since the breakdown of the marriage, and is demonstrably secure, settled and happy, then on the principle of avoiding unnecessary disturbance, custody would normally be awarded to that parent whether father or mother.

It is competent too for a court to make an award of joint custody, whereby both parents retain their rights in respect of the child. Of course disputes could arise, and success of joint custody very much depends on parents maintaining an amicable working relationship.

In the majority of divorces, it is true to say that the parents agree arrangements for their children's care, and if satisfactory, the court endorses these by making a formal award of custody. ■

Cathy Marr

Cathy Marr is a solicitor with practical social work experience who has recently become a full-time mother. She will write a regular law column, on which we welcome letters.





Ruby McInnes

"Welfare of the child . . ."

"Welfare" in this context is a combination of all factors which contribute to the child's well-being. It is crucial that the court must regard these factors as the paramount consideration. It must accordingly focus on the child's needs rather than any parental actions which may have led to the marriage breakdown. (Unless of course these are relevant matters – contrast alleged abuse with admitted adultery.) In this way, the custody decision is distinct from any fault principle which may ap-

ply in the divorce itself.

The court must also be satisfied that its decision is "in the interests of the child". This is very much procedural and means that the court cannot merely "rubber stamp" agreement reached by the parties in an undefended case. It must enquire into the circumstances of the custody-seeking parent and be satisfied that he/she can provide the necessary care and security. If not so satisfied, an order must not be made.

Welfare of the child as the paramount consideration of the court

A West German mother and a Scottish father separated, their two young children going with the mother. Shortly after this, father removed the children and brought them back to Scotland where he raised an action for custody.

Mother took legal action in West Germany and obtained both a divorce and an order granting her custody of the children. When the father's action for custody was heard, the court ad-

mitted that the foreign custody order was entitled to grave consideration but added that it remained merely one matter to be taken into account in considering what was best for the children. The welfare of the children was of paramount consideration irrespective of orders made by courts of other countries. This case indicates how the court must, above all else, focus on the needs of the children.

(Sinclair v Sinclair 1988 SLT87)

The principle of the 'status quo'

On divorce, mother was awarded custody of her two children but following a breakdown, she allowed the children to return to father. Three years later, father sought an award of custody himself. The children were settled and happy with him although one had apparently retained a strong affection for mother who had a comfortable home and family support.

Having looked at all the circumstances, the court awarded custody to father. The basis of the decision was that the children needed stability, their existing home arrangements were satisfactory and it would be unwise to separate them. Accordingly the status quo should not be disturbed.

(Cairns v McNulty 1989 GWD1988)



The Unprotected Teenager

Elsbeth Ann Oliver, continuing from her account of her early sexual abuse at the hands of her elder brothers, recollects the effects on other relationships – particularly with her mother.

Since I have grown up and had a family of my own, I have been all too aware of the role of a mother as 'protector'. And this is what my own mother failed to do for me. Both my brothers abused me, and if she knew, she did nothing.

When I threw a tantrum, no one wondered why. I was a 'spoilt brat' they said. When I was a teenager and expected to give a hand with the chores, I hated having to iron their shirts – I would have loved to have burned them but did not dare.

When I started my periods, I

did not know what was happening to me. Was I having a baby? I had had no warning. My two older sisters had left home. Our school gave no mention to such things. When mother saw my stained clothing she gave me half a crown and sent me to the shop. Mrs So and So will give you the

necessaries she said.

I did not know what to do with the used towels, so I wrapped them in paper and hid them in a drawer. Maybe when she found them mother would explain. Did she heck! She called me a dirty slut. And I felt like one – and a used one at that.

The girls at school started to talk about growing up and I gleaned a little knowledge from them. But I never talked about my being abused. I felt so guilty.

For a while I stole my father's cigarettes – more rows. I did not really want to smoke, but thought dad would talk to me. He didn't. Curiously enough I never blamed my dad for not protecting me. All my hostility was aimed at my mother.

I started staying out late at night, which only made matters worse. If I was with one of the

boys, all I wanted was for him to cuddle me. I did not want sex. After all I was staying out late to avoid my brother coming into my room, especially if I knew my parents were out and he was in charge.

My relationship with my mother was very poor all through my teens. She never seemed to be interested in anything I did, or in any small achievement. Exam passes were belittled, winning a local beauty contest dismissed. One elder brother started work for the family business and so stayed at home. He used to criticise my friends, and mother always agreed that they were bad company.

Mother always said I was 'too big for my boots', and if I defended myself 'my tongue would land me in trouble'. I did try to put a shell round myself in those days, and maybe I did act 'stuck up'. I always felt I was under-achieving and with a little encouragement could have done so much more. Although I did in later life, with the help of my husband and family, I still feel I missed out.

Even now my mother has a very poor opinion of me and would never acknowledge any of my successes. She would say I was 'bumming' – so I don't tell her anymore.

When I married and left home I wanted to cut myself off from my family. My husband though insisted that we kept contact with them for our children's sake. It has been very hard for me over the years to do so.

If I am in my mother's house and any news item in the papers or on tv. comes up about abuse – like the Cleveland affair – mother will get very dogmatic and refuse to believe that such things happen. It's a lot of nonsense! she will say. Lacking the courage to say You are wrong! Children are abused – you are looking at a product in your own family, I just leave the room.

I have often wondered if my relationship with my mother would have been different had she known the truth. Would the enmity between us have been less, or would it have been worse, with me as with so much else, getting the blame? I would dearly love to tell her, but even now, I doubt if she would believe me.

Splitting up

There were more than five and a half thousand divorces involving children in Scotland last year. Taking into account separations which do not end in divorce, that means many families each year face significant change.

And when battles over custody and access ensue, children may experience lasting damage. Family Conciliation is a relatively new service which helps parents to meet their children's needs after the breakdown of the relationship.

A mother and father who had not spoken for two years, whilst fighting through the courts for custody, decided after the divorce to try conciliation to break the deadlock –

"I wish we had come to Conciliation sooner. At times we were too busy with our own problems to think about what was really best for the children and how they must have been feeling

The conciliator will not take sides, but may propose options and give information. Most cases are brought to a conclusion within two or three sessions. Parents are welcome back at any stage, and indeed as children get older, new arrangements may need to be made.

Agreements reached at conciliation are usually written down and parents are advised to have them scrutinised by their solicitors before proceeding. The agreements are often used by solicitors as a basis for formally binding arrangements made by the court.

The acceptance and credibility which conciliation has established can be gauged from the large number of referrals – from social workers, from Citizens Advice Bureaux, from Marriage Guidance, and from many parents themselves – which each

When family relations break down, a conciliator can help iron out the new situation. Sam Martin and Bert McCann describe the work of the Family Conciliation Service in Scotland.

about it all."

"... we could have saved the children and ourselves a lot of stress, not to mention time and money, if we had gone for conciliation earlier."

The children of this broken marriage emerged from the experience hopefully without too much lasting damage. Sadly many children caught up in similar situations do not.

So what is family conciliation? Most emphatically it is not about reconciliation, i.e. patching up the relationship between the partners. Nor is it a substitute for legal advice, or counselling.

Conciliation is a way in which people leaving a relationship are helped to make together the important decisions about their own and their children's future, especially custody and access. Decisions are made using a conciliator, a neutral third party, who can listen to both parents and sometimes to the children of the relationship.

Both parents meet together with a conciliator, on neutral ground.

Regional Family Conciliation Service receives. Research too, shows that conciliation works, and participants are positive about the outcome.

Increasingly referrals are coming from the courts and solicitors, and a formal Code of Practice between solicitors and conciliators has been agreed.

Only six years after the introduction of an initial pilot project in Scotland, Family Conciliation Services are now available throughout the Regions. Funding for the service is precarious however. Although in receipt of funds from central and local government, Family Conciliation is significantly dependent on its charitable status and income from trusts. Yet with Family Conciliation set to become an integral part of the divorce process, the services will be under increasing pressure to expand.

For information about Family Conciliation, and for your local service, contact the Scottish Association of Family Conciliation Services, 40 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh

Among the Contributors in this issue...

Graham Atherton is Senior Researcher with the Scottish Consumer Council in Glasgow.

Daniel Boyle lectures in Communication and Media Studies at Dundee College of Further Education. His is currently working on a new screenplay for BBC television.

Nick Child is a child and family psychiatrist in Lanarkshire and active in the Association for Family Therapy.

Tony Duffy is an English teacher at Queen Anne High School, Dunfermline. He lives in Kinghorn with his wife and daughter.

Sara Evans is a freelance journalist.

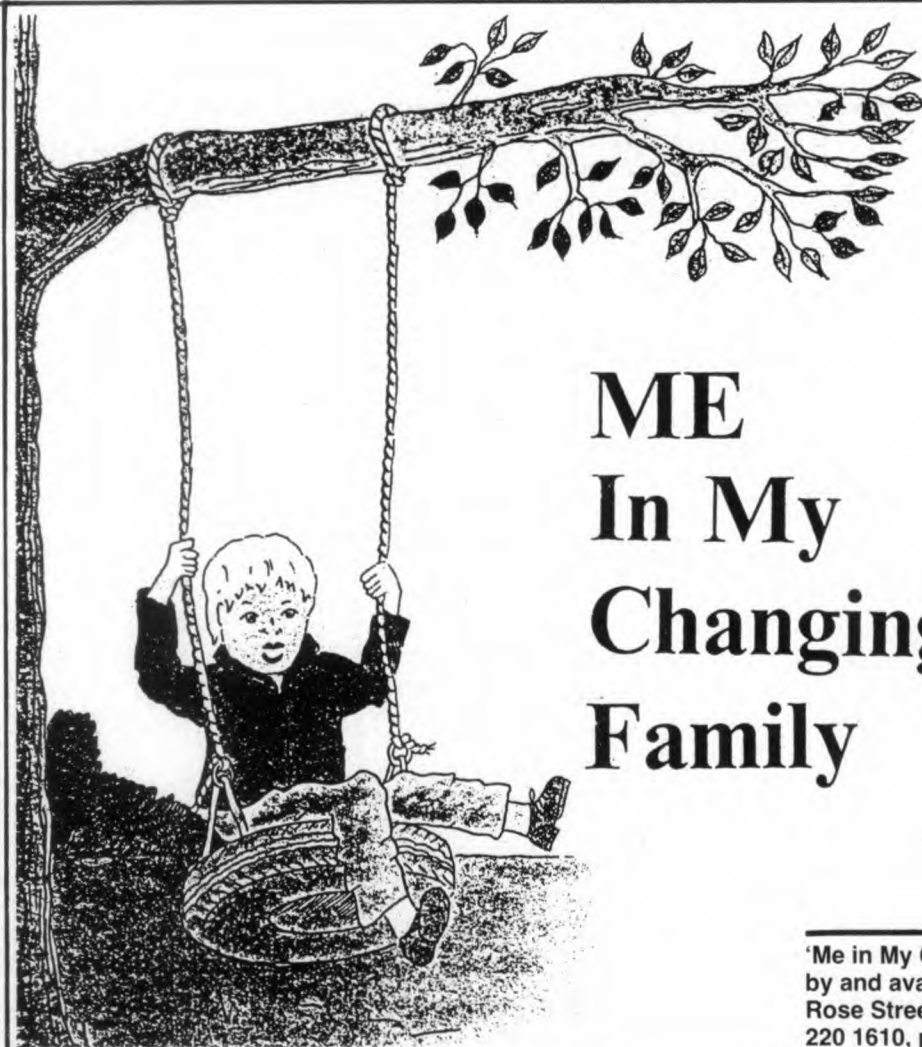
Cathy Marr is a solicitor with practical social work experience who has recently become a full-time mother.

Janette Montague is a music therapist with Greater Glasgow Health Board.

Elsbeth Ann Oliver is a pen name of a Scottish Child reader.

Joe Owens is a freelance writer currently working in Edinburgh.

Sheila Ramsay works in a child care team in Strathclyde Social Work Department.



**A booklet for
children whose
families are
changing due to
separation and
divorce.**

ME In My Changing Family

In her foreword Althea says . . .

"This is your very own book and you can write part of the story yourself. Draw your own pictures, stick photographs in the spaces and colour in the drawings in the book. You can fill in missing words or cross some out.

"I hope it will help you to ask questions and to talk about how you feel."

'Me in My Changing Family' by Beth Batey is produced by and available from Family Conciliation Scotland, 127 Rose Street South Lane, Edinburgh EH2 5BB Tel 031 220 1610, price £1.50.

Public Meeting

Allergies and Nutrition

27th February 1990

**Speaker: Dr Cedric de Voil GP,
Chairman,
Scottish McCarrison Society**

**8-10 pm St George & St Andrew
Church Hall, Edinburgh
Entrance £1**

**For further information phone
031-225 7503.**



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Really Something to Celebrate

Whether we took our tabloids or the other fare over the festive season we fed from the banquet of reviews and previews of past and still to come years and decades.

The telly did its bit too. But it left us rather more in our hibernatory reverie in front of the Christmas box's expensive

glitter, instead of showing the real world's outstanding climax of the decade in Eastern Europe. Never mind the Jedi or 007, or even Herod culling the babies. Here were youngsters, armed only with their lives, claiming the streets and possible death from gunmen in sheep's clothing. And the cause that drove this unprecedented revolution was a

simple belief in a more human system.

The standard British celebrations seemed even more trite than usual beside all this rebirthing of whole societies, grim and arduous though much of Eastern Europe's development must continue to be. The Hogmanay celebrations coverage

didn't touch the raw expression of "man tae man the world o'er . . . an a' that" that was going on elsewhere at the time.

What, if anything, would get the British to mobilise themselves like this? Would we never make a move until personal or national history brings extremes of suffering? There is some reason to mobilise – in subtler ways Scotland does have its parallels with oppressed Eastern Europe. Michaelai Forsythscue, beware! On the other hand, no need to bother, the Scottish nation is not yet mobilising beyond the armchair and the pub.

At work, the tip of the iceberg of family problems shows in flurry of referrals as everyone tries to clear their desk of anything that might spoil the image of a happy season. During those weeks, anyone Scrooge-like enough to want to work at their problems is hissed off the stage. Yet articles charting the awfulness of the Christmas period for many individuals couples and families have been common this year.

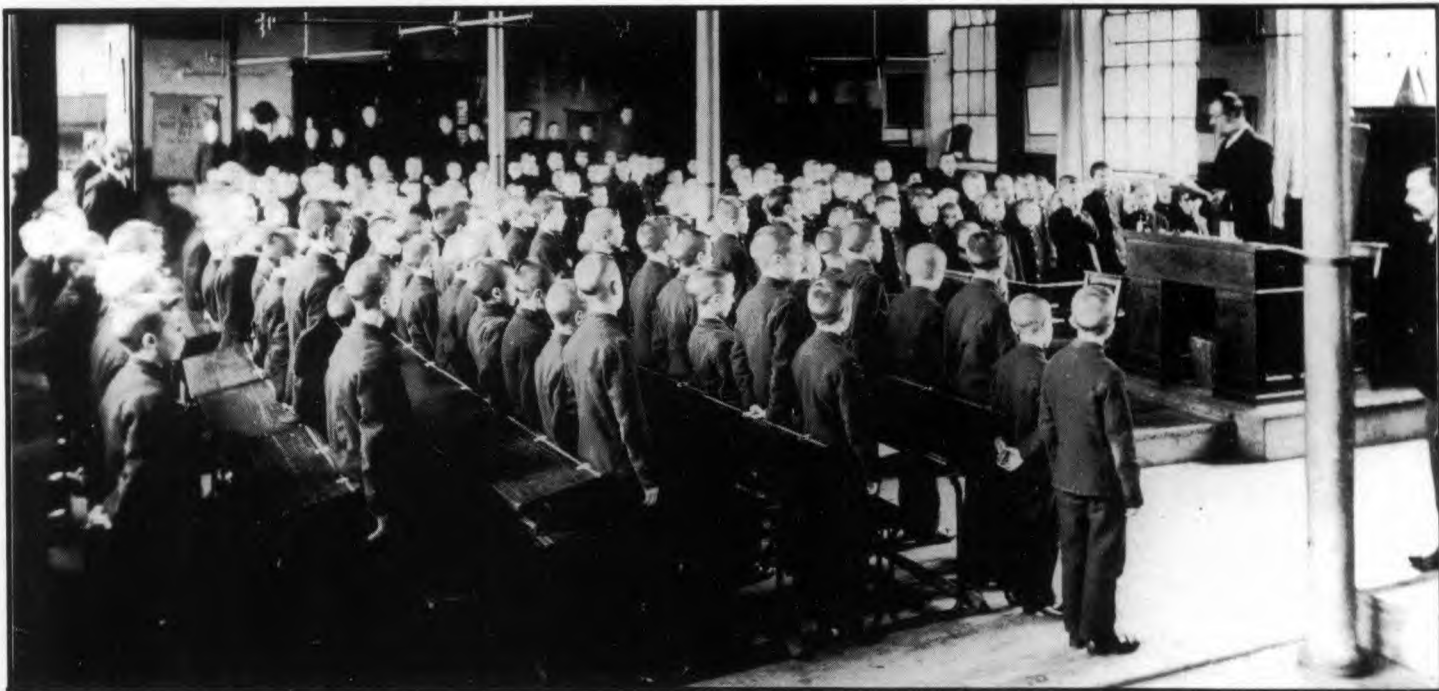
By the end of January, the icing has thawed if the weather hasn't. But it can't be business as usual with what's lined up for the 1990s. Major global enmity has melted followed by the justification for its costly defensive operations. The other world-size tasks present – east and west, rich and poor, black and white, male and female, mother nature and man's muggery.

Our thinking can't go on in same old tracks now. In the new mood, don't our feet start tapping? Primary school kids have already been pictured waiting for penpals in Eastern Europe. Couldn't all Scots find a lot of this revolutionary European culture going on in 1990? ■

Nick Child

Scottish Child February/March 1990 31

LETTERS



Mind-Bending Schools

Dear Editor,

Is it true that school bends minds? Is it true that school, far from teaching you to think, actually only teaches you to regurgitate the particular side of an argument that a teacher wants to hear? I say yes, undoubtedly, yes. But is this where the evil of high school education stops? I fear not. I feel that by far the most damaging aspect of school is teachers' 'social' attitude towards pupils.

If you are in a certain class or a in a certain group, you are either accepted or rejected. I feel this most strongly, as I chose to do a number of O Grades and Highers but was also in a group of so-say 'drop-outs'. It was a constant struggle against author-

ity as teachers naturally assumed the worst of us and seemed to come down harder on our group than any other. This was most clearly expressed for me in the on-going vendetta I held with my year head.

Fortunately for me, I had a stable background and some good help from home. I took the battle of 'who was a drop-out' (which my year head had already decided I was), to the exam room and proved him wrong.

However, for others it wasn't so easy. They didn't have people at home telling them to ignore the teachers; they didn't have the means of exams to prove themselves.

Being told that you are 'of no worth' and 'will never do anything worthwhile' will eventually begin to get to you. Even someone with the strongest will can't take an adult they do in some ways respect saying that to them day in, day out.

So what of 'my group' some three years after most of them left school? Well, I have taken the accepted path through university and higher education that was supposedly reserved for the school's 'successes'.

I helped keep the school's university education statistics up which is what seems to matter most. But what about the negative statistics – the rest of the group? Well, being subjected to abuse throughout this time has

produced some predictable effects. One now has a deferred sentence looming over him, one is unemployed, one is a labourer in London, one an office junior.

The point of this rather lengthy letter is to ask when will teachers begin to see that their role as formers of social attitudes is as important as their duty to get pupils through exams? Surely school is not just about marks on paper but more about producing people, people who may never become great intellectuals or scientists but who have a true opinion of themselves and a higher esteem so that they do not constantly feel the bottom of the pile.

Yours sincerely,

Quinton Marsh.

Poll Tax Ads

Dear Editor,

I have to admit that I seldom notice the advertisements in your magazine, although I do read all the articles. I therefore had not seen the anti-poll tax ad mentioned by Audrey Salter in her letter. However, having had my attention drawn to the issue, I now notice not only the second advert but also the very large photograph, and of course your own statement that you do not intend to pay your poll tax.

I am totally opposed to this tax on the grounds that it is inequitable, that I, a reasonably well-

paid academic living in a pleasant suburb, should pay the same as someone earning much less and living say, in Easterhouse.

But I cannot condone non-payment as a protest. Not only is it breaking the law, but it is depriving the local authority of money which could be used to help the very children **Scottish Child** aims to support. Can I ask you how you square your conscience on this matter?

Scottish Child is quite a useful magazine for panel members but if it strays too far into the realms of politics, or continues to support breaking the law, however

bad that law may be, then I and the panel members in the regions which I train will certainly be taking your clearly expressed editorial stance into consideration when the time comes to renew subscriptions.

Helen J Millar
Children's Panel Training Organiser
Strathclyde and Dumfries & Galloway

Editor: Blind obedience never made bad law into good, so I have no problems of conscience by stating my intention to break a law which is imposed without popular consent.

The poll tax is part of, in my view, an iniquitous system of local authority finance, which is designed not to increase, but to further control and reduce public spending. As we go to press there has still to be action on the many thousands of notices issued by sheriff's officers. If wide scale poindings have now taken place, I'll wager many of them will be in homes where children come before the panel. I don't envy your task in training panel members to advise parents in how to deal with such unjust additional pressure.

I do hope you will continue to read all of our articles.

Self-Determination and Power Event

Dear Editor,

Congratulations on your excellent organisation of the conference.

Noam Chomsky was fascinating – clear and incisive. I agreed most with one of his closing remarks – “the importance of these gatherings is in people meeting together.” I enjoyed the discussion groups, but much of the rest of the two days only reminded me how boring I find political theory.

Politics surely is *doing*. When a campaign has time to analyse theory, it probably isn't doing enough. Poll tax activists meet to discuss tactics, not dialectic.

A Chomsky now and then is useful to remind us of the fundamental questions, and to give us an excuse for a party. But let's not get too bogged down trying to find a theoretical structure – Marxist, nationalist or green – to impose on everything. For me at present, the important thing is to question authority and injustice, not seeking to exchange one authority for another. I like parties, not Parties.

Chris Ballance
Glasgow

Dear Editor,

We found your conference extremely stimulating and valuable not only because of Professor Chomsky's contribution, but

because of the range and level of debate generally. Although time pressures meant that we were unable to participate fully in the discussion groups, we came away from the event with much that we felt was of immediate relevance to our own area of broadcasting.

May we pass on too our congratulations to Derek Rodger for his sensitive and engaging chairing of the conference.

Kenneth MacQuarrie
Head of Gaelic Television
BBC, Glasgow

Dear Editor,

We wish to congratulate you and everyone involved in the organisation of the Self Determination and Power event. We attended for one day only and thought that the event was an innovative idea.

However we are curious to find out whether the event was perceived by yourselves as a 'one off' or 'the start of something which would continue'. The latter is certainly what we would hope for given the serious nature of the problems that were posed on that day.

What is the next stage – what do we all do about changing things? Perhaps an association could be formed of those who would be interested in continuing the discussion.

We would be interested to have your comments.

Pamela Bartlett
L.A. Bartlett
Glasgow

Dear Editor,

I write to express my appreciation of the 'Self-Determination and Power' Event which you organised with the Free University and the Edinburgh Review this week in Govan. The speeches by Noam Chomsky and others were most interesting and intellectually stimulating.

It was the gathering, however, of so many people from different walks of life that I found most exciting. The discussion groups confirmed my belief that many of us struggle with the same crises, whether as parents or in our paid employment. Some straight talking was done about the bureaucracies that can dominate our lives and how to begin to challenge them.

With new ideas I return to my work with the young homeless at Edinburgh 'Stopover', and wonder whether you will be organising a follow-up event?

Alan S Riddell
Edinburgh

SCOTTISH CHILD welcomes readers letters. Please send letters on any aspect of Scotland growing up to The Editor.

Allergies

Dear Editor,

Eileen Bebbington's letter (Scottish Child, December issue), highlights a great gap in our NHS provision for the ill. She is quite right that huge sums could be saved if only NHS doctors were better informed. Her child's chronic fatigue, hyperactivity and hypersensitivity to additives are basically allergy in its full sense, due to a dysfunctioning immune system. Many things can damage the immune system and set off trouble, including viruses, the likely cause in her child's case.

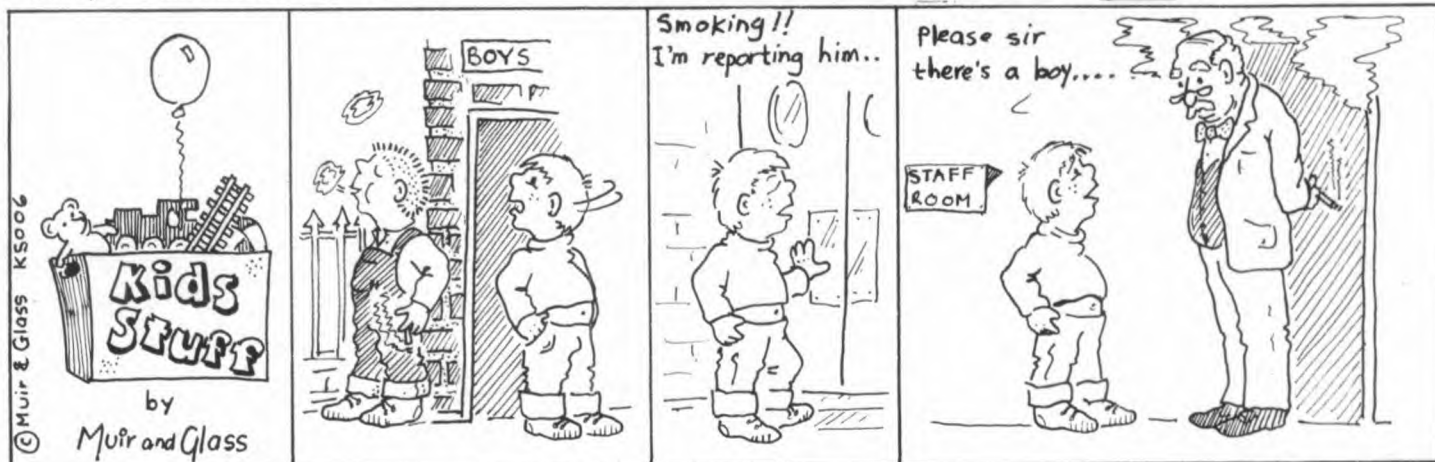
As long as doctors fail us we have to find out for ourselves about allergy by reading allergy books like Dr Richard Mackarness's *Not all in the Mind* or Dr Theron Randolph's *Allergies: Your Hidden Enemy*.

The great thing to remember is that allergy is individual. One important Lancet study showed that, though additives were the commonest allergens, no child was allergic to additives alone. All had food allergies too. Hospital food allergy tests are hopelessly unreliable, so you may have to do your own detective work.

As well as identifying and avoiding allergens, you can boost the immune system with vitamins and other nutrients which can improve immune system function. I shall be glad to give enquirers information and reading lists.

Yours sincerely,

Fabienne Smith,
Scottish Representative
Action Against Allergy
55 Manor Place,
Edinburgh EH3 7EG



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CITIZENS THEATRE

ENRICO FOUR

BY LUIGI PIRANDELLO



FRIDAY 2nd FEBRUARY –
SATURDAY 3rd MARCH 1990

"We've got the setting, we've got the costumes, and there's enough material in the history of Enrico Four for half a dozens tragedies, not just one. But the four of us... we're just there, with no one to tell us what to act. It's Form without Content. We're worse off than his real privy councillors. They followed their own interests at the expense of other peoples'. But us! Here we are, all dressed up, and for what? Nothing...puppets hanging up, waiting to be taken down, moved about, given something to say."

THE FOUR HORSEMEN OF THE APOCALYPSE

AFTER V. BLASCO IBAÑEZ



FRIDAY 9th –
SATURDAY 31st MARCH 1990

"She loved Julio...and she loved her husband. They were different kinds of love. She could not say which was the stronger, but War was forcing her to choose between the two.

It seemed to Julio, as he looked round him, that the afternoon was undergoing some celestial phenomenon. It appeared to him that from afar was echoing the gallop of the four Apocalyptic horsemen, riding rough-shod over all his fellow-creatures. He saw the strong and brutal giant with the sword of War, the archer with his repulsive smile, shooting his pestilential arrows, the bald-headed miser with the scales of Famine, the hard-riding spectre with the scythe of Death. All the rest was a dream.

The four horsemen were the reality..."

GORBALS GLASGOW

Community Speak

It's interesting how some words can suddenly find favour with those in power—and even more interesting how their meaning seems to subtly change in the process. We're used to hearing words like 'freedom', 'enterprise', and 'order', as though they are the government's personal possessions.

'Community' seems to me to be, disturbingly, in danger of being kidnapped too. As in 'Community Charge', 'Care in the Community', or even 'the European Community'.

So—'community'—joint ownership or liability; state of being shared or held in common; fellowship . . . (OED). I thought so. 'Community' is a good word, with not much to do with the poll tax, the Government's definition of care, or its relations with the rest of Europe. They haven't officially changed the meaning, but they're trying to.

I might be more willing to pay my community charge if it meant I jointly owned and was liable for

the services I received. I'm sure it would help, say, an unemployed couple in Easterhouse to understand why each of them had to pay the same as the Secretary of State, if they realised it's because they share and hold common the resources of the community.

But what about "Care in the Community"? That sounds like a positive concept of collective action and control. Not a bit of it!

A·F·T·E·R·T·H·O·U·G·H·T·S

Turns out that it means, more often than not, individualised privatised care for those who can afford it. And being the responsibility of no one for those who can't. Not a lot of joint responsibility or sharing. As for the European Community, we seem to want what we can get out of it, but without having to give up any of our own. So much for fellowship!

"Community", it seems, is a word which should be reclaimed before it gets lost like some of the others. Maybe we could learn something from the communities of Eastern Europe. Western leaders see the radical changes there as a vindication of the drive for increased individual freedom. Undoubtedly that has been a major motivation. But those same leaders pay less attention to the fact that governments were toppled by the most

impressive and courageous show of collective action seen in at least the last decade. Maybe the implications of this are too threatening for them.

If the communities of East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Romania and the rest can hold onto that collectivity while pursuing individual freedom and improved living standards then

they may, on behalf of all of us, learn a lot about "joint ownership or liability; state of being shared or held in common; fellowship".

And whilst on the subject of distorted meanings, I have to share my puzzlement. When the wealth and luxurious living conditions of Honecker and Ceausescu were discovered, there was a justified outcry of rage and charges of corruption. Where is the outcry about the wealth and luxury of the top 10% in this country compared to the members of our community living in poverty who, like their East European counterparts, cannot afford meat, fresh fruit or new shoes?

We've known for a while that one person's terrorist is another person's freedom fighter. Maybe we're learning that one country's corruption is another country's private enterprise. ■

Sheila Ramsay

In the next issue...

April/May 1990



HEALTH SERVICE – DEATH & DESTRUCTION? As the Health Service Review works its way to implementation in April, Scottish Child investigates the effects . . . "the G.P. service is being demolished!" is one doctor's alarming view.

Men's work/Women's work

Childcare – Marion Flett reviews the urgent needs for the 90s.

plus REGULARS.

OUT 1st APRIL SCOTTISH CHILD is distributed on a for-sale-or-return basis through John Menzies and other newsagents. Order it from any newsagent.

A UNIQUE POSTCARD OFFER FROM SCOTTISH CHILD

Scottish Child has just produced its first ever set of postcards – 8 images of Scottish childhood in the 1980s captured by some of Scotland's up-and-coming photographers. These unique, high quality postcards are being produced in a strictly limited edition, making the cards not only the perfect way of sending messages to friends and family, but also highly collectable.

In order to launch this set of postcards we've decided to offer the complete set of 8 **ABSOLUTELY FREE** to new subscribers to **Scottish Child**. If you take out a first-time individual subscription – for only £6 a year – using the standing order form below, we'll send you the cards right away – and you'll be a subscriber to Scotland's fastest growing independent magazine.

If you already have a subscription, don't worry – we've a special offer for you too. The cards cost 25p each, but if you send £1.50 to the address below we'll send you the whole set – or send it to anyone you want us to, enclosing a message from you. Hurry though – there'll never be another first set of **Scottish Child** postcards.



I want to take advantage of your offer of a set of 8 **Scottish Child** Postcards **ABSOLUTELY FREE** with a subscription to **Scottish Child** for one year (six issues) at a price of only £6 including postage. I understand that to qualify for this offer I must be a first-time individual subscriber and pay by standing order.

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Please Return to **Scottish Child, 17 Napier Road, Edinburgh EH10 5AZ.**

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Child**